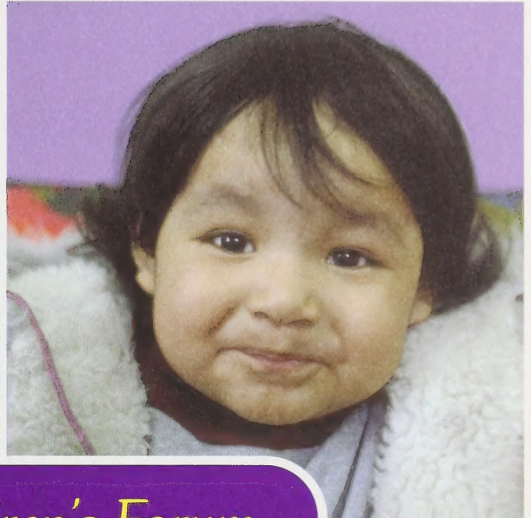


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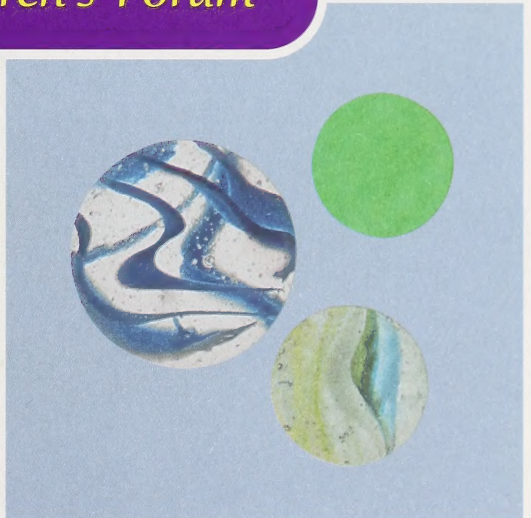
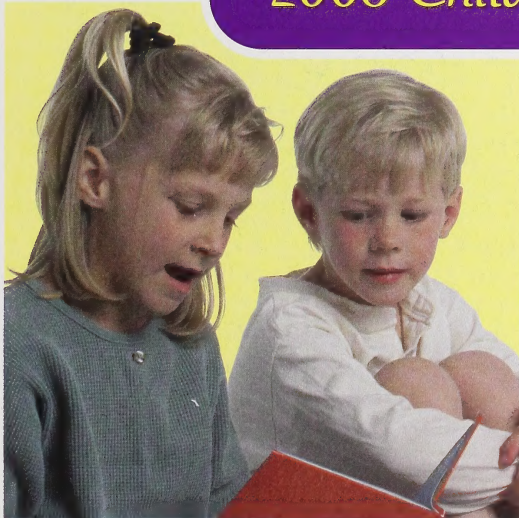
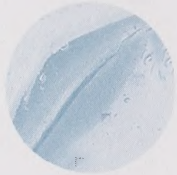


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Introduction



**The last Children's Forum,
*Uniting for Children: 2001
Focus Forward*, produced
six main themes on how
government could work to**

improve programs and services

for Alberta's children and youth:

- Uniting for Knowledge
- Uniting for Young Children
- Uniting for Parenting
- Uniting for Transitions
- Uniting for Youth
- Uniting for Healthy Children

Reflective of these themes, the Alberta Government is continuing with its commitment to making a difference for our children, youth and families through collaboration and partnerships. Our goal is to ensure that Alberta's children and youth are supported in reaching their potential.

To achieve this goal, the Alberta Government delivers numerous programs, through cross-ministerial partnerships that focus on:

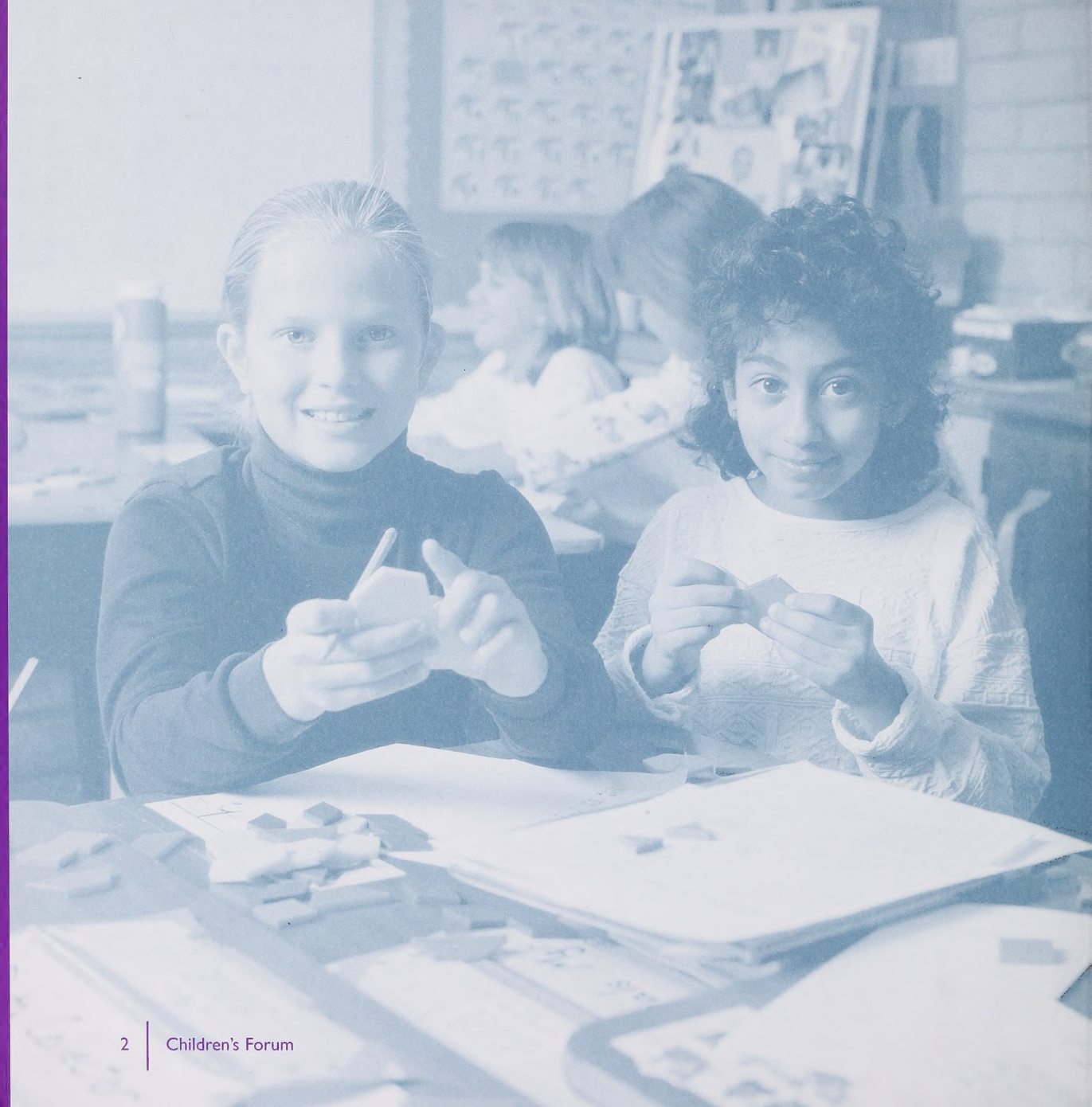
- Increasing collaboration regarding programs for children and youth
- Fostering the integration of programs and services
- Enhancing the continuum of supports for families, children and youth.

One of many cross-ministerial partnerships is the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative (ACYI), introduced in 1998. Through the ACYI, ministries of the Alberta Government are working collaboratively with community partners to support the healthy development of Alberta's children and youth.

Alberta Government partners include:

- Alberta Children's Services
- Alberta Learning
- Alberta Health and Wellness, including
 - Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
 - Alberta Mental Health Board
- Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development
- Alberta Community Development
- Alberta Human Resources & Employment
- Alberta Solicitor General

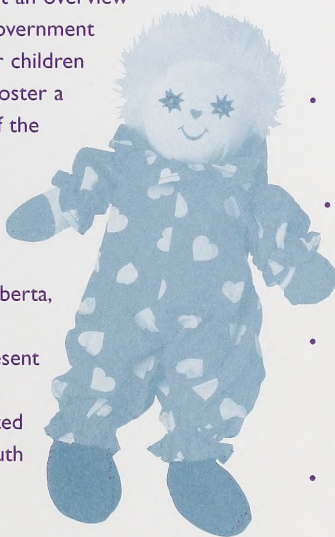
The Alberta Government's objective is to provide opportunities for organizations and individuals to work together for children, youth and their families. Safe and healthy children, who are successful at learning, will result in a healthier society, a better position for Alberta in a competitive global economy, and more sustainable public programs. Government efforts to collaborate and integrate programs and services on behalf of children, youth and families will benefit Albertans in years to come.



Context & Overview

What is the purpose of this update?

- This biennial report is intended to serve as an update for all Albertans on the collective efforts of the Government of Alberta with respect to programs for Alberta's children and youth.
- It is intended to present an overview of new or enhanced Government of Alberta programs for children and youth in order to foster a better understanding of the supports available to Alberta families.
- While there are many ongoing programs for children and youth in Alberta, the programs identified within this update represent specific Government of Alberta initiatives targeted at Alberta's children, youth and families since the 2001 Children's Forum.



What is contained in this update?

- Programs and services have been identified under the following five general impact areas:
 - “A Healthy Start in Life”
 - “Growing Up Safe & Healthy”
 - “Mentors & Everyday Heroes”
 - “Learning to Help Others”
 - “Responsive Communities”
- “Aspirations” have been defined for each core impact area to illustrate the collective goals of all the programs and activities within each impact area.
- Together, these aspirations represent the ‘North Star’ that Albertans are targeting through the delivery of children and youth “programs and initiatives.”
- “Smiles ‘n’ Snapshots” have been identified to demonstrate the program benefits, and impacts and trends that are emerging through the delivery of current programs.
- “Tomorrow” statements illustrate the continuity of effort and identify the needs of tomorrow to sustain success.
- For additional information related to individual programs, please visit the Government of Alberta website at www.gov.ab.ca.

Stories & Experiences



The following personal stories are from Alberta children, young people, and parents.

These stories help demonstrate the difference that government programs continue to make in the lives of our province's children and youth.

"It is so rewarding to watch the amazing progress that women make during the three years in the First Steps program.

They slowly begin to believe in themselves

and pull themselves up from the depths of addictions, poverty and violence.

The smiles on their faces, and the faces of their children say it best!"

~ First Steps Program, Lethbridge ~




"I try to continue making a difference in my community by

trying to keep it clean and looking nice...

I plan to create my own website, with the computer I received as the award,
that will teach people about how to keep the earth clean. I hope I can continue
helping the world and the people living in it."

~ Story from "Great Kids Awards 2002" ~



Family Literacy “has been a great activity for my children and I to do together -
to learn together and have fun together.

The actions to the songs and rhymes have been great for my daughter’s coordination
and my infant has enjoyed watching and interacting with others.”

“The information inside the bookbag says that reading from the time the baby is small
could have an effect on school success. I did so bad at school, but I can read,
so I’m going to make sure my child gets everything I can give.”

~ Quotes: 2002 Family Literacy Initiative Fund Reports ~

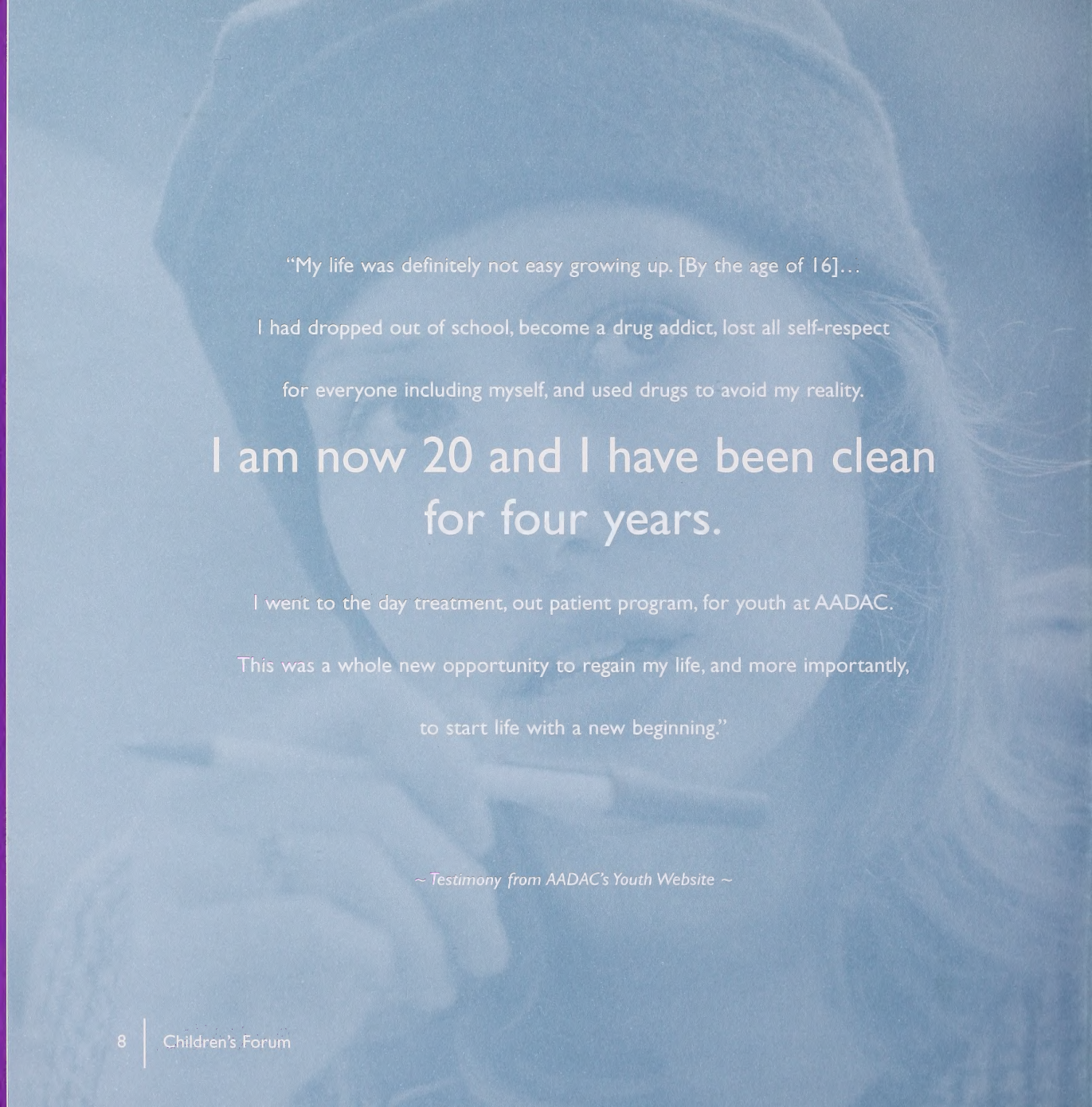
“Stress is a bad thing when you’re pregnant. [Young Family Wellness] has been awesome in keeping me relaxed and stress-free... There’s plenty of young moms and young families who need the help.”

~ Quote: Young mother speaking on Young Family Wellness Initiative ~ Edmonton Journal, April 2002 ~

“I make a difference in the Aboriginal community which I belong to because I volunteer at different functions. I assist elders, work with children, and help as much as I can. Volunteering has taught me a lot about my roots and gives me the sense of belonging to my community.”

~ Story from “Great Kids Awards 2002” ~





“My life was definitely not easy growing up. [By the age of 16]...

I had dropped out of school, become a drug addict, lost all self-respect
for everyone including myself, and used drugs to avoid my reality.

**I am now 20 and I have been clean
for four years.**

I went to the day treatment, out patient program, for youth at AADAC.

This was a whole new opportunity to regain my life, and more importantly,
to start life with a new beginning.”

~ Testimony from AADAC's Youth Website ~

IMPACT AREA:

"A Healthy Start in Life"

Children need care and support to have a healthy start in life.



Claire Wortel - My Alberta

Aspirations

Our programs and initiatives in this area are working to:

- Support all families and equip them with parenting skills
- Encourage early intervention to optimize healthy births, healthy babies and the healthy development of young children
- Provide enhanced services to expectant parents, new parents, infants and young children
- Provide physical and emotional supports for all families, particularly those at risk

Programs & Initiatives

Our programs and initiatives are committed to having a positive impact by supporting a healthy start in life for Alberta's children. Since the 2001 Children's Forum, many new programs have been introduced to support this goal in the areas of child health and development, parent education and assistance, and targeted supports.



Smiles 'n' Snapshots

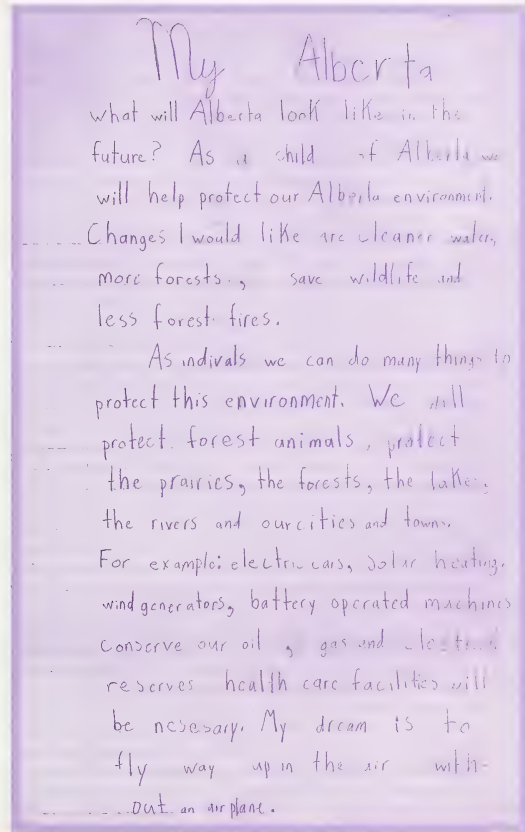
Program benefits to Alberta children and youth include:

- Families have more knowledge to nurture and care for their children
- Families have enhanced access to child care and child care options
- Improved early identification and intervention services have helped to optimize child development
- Families and children at risk have more supports to attain healthy physical and emotional development

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, we will continue to:

- Develop resources to support programs and awareness of the importance of a healthy start
- Enhance early child development programs
- Make services and information on parenting more available



Cody Chamberlin - My Alberta

Programs and Initiatives - "A Healthy Start in Life"

Child Health & Development

Early Childhood Development Strategy

- Through the development of Alberta's Early Childhood Development Strategy, the Government of Alberta has invested resources to enhance four key areas: services to expectant parents, new parents and infants; enhanced parenting supports and parenting skills programs; enhanced quality programming in childcare settings, preschool programs; and community capacity building to effectively plan with government and non-government partners.

Early Childhood Development Programming in Childcare Settings

- Enhancements of early childhood development programming, in child care settings, to promote the development of children and better prepare them for school.
- Expanded Head Start programs and literacy-based preschool programs.

Community Mapping Project

- A community mapping project was undertaken with 2,800 kindergarten children in Calgary to provide a clear picture of their readiness to learn at school.
- Edmonton and area Child and Family Services Authority and Metis Settlements Child and Family Services Authority are piloting a community mapping project and early development instrument to assess school readiness.

Programs and Initiatives - "A Healthy Start in Life" - continued

Young Family Wellness Initiative

- Provides enhanced services to expectant parents, new parents and infants, and young children and their families.
- Services include prenatal education, breastfeeding support, well child screening assessment and referral, parenting support and education, specialized supports for infants and children with developmental delays, and injury prevention initiatives.

Alberta Perinatal Health Program

- Planning underway which will promote maternal health, positive birth outcomes and healthy infancy up to one year of age, through provincial leadership and coordination.

Newborn Metabolic Screening Program

- Ensures all newborn infants receive metabolic testing and follow-up as required.

Screening and Tracking Project

- Working towards the development of potential universal screening tools to assess risk factors and developmental milestones for children at birth, 18 months, three years and five years.
- Exploring screening for early identification and tracking of developmental progress.

Alberta Child Care Initiative

- The Alberta Child Care Initiative, announced in December 2002, strengthens standards and best practices in child care settings to support families in providing quality child care for their children and to better meet their developmental needs. Initiatives include:
 - Child Care Accreditation Program - establishes provincial standards for child care programs.

Programs and Initiatives - "A Healthy Start in Life" - continued

Alberta Child Care Initiative (continued)

- Respite Care Program - provides short-term child care placements for at-risk families needing support.
- Child Care Nutritional Program - enhances nutritional quality of meals and snacks served to children.

Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care

- A shared framework signed in March 2003 by federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions for reporting progress, research and best practices in early childhood development.

Parent Education and Assistance

Family/Parenting Resource Centre Project

- Exploring the current scope of family/parenting resource centres across the province, as well as current research in order to make decisions related to building community capacity for family/parenting services that support children age birth to six and their families through critical periods of brain development.

Home Visitation

- Provides support in the parent's home with the goal of enhancing parenting skills and providing information on child development, child health, and other aspects of positive family functioning for families with children age birth to five who are at risk.

Early Childhood Development "From Pregnancy to Parenting" Website

- Launched in April 2002, this website provides information to parents on child health, safety and development for families with children from birth to six years.

Programs and Initiatives - "A Healthy Start in Life" - continued

Targeted Support

AADAC Enhanced Services to Women

- Aims to achieve healthy birth outcomes through services targeted at high-risk women using alcohol and other substances in three regions in Alberta.

Aboriginal Healthy Beginnings (AHB)

- Provides health linkages and a support network to Aboriginal women who are pre-natal or post-natal and are isolated from their communities; goals include improved birth outcomes and provision of further support to Aboriginal mothers to care for their children.

Aboriginal Health Educator: Women's Health

- Addresses culturally sensitive issues surrounding Aboriginal women's birthing and post-natal experiences.

Early Childhood Development Services - Children's Mental Health

- Aims to improve and increase the coping capacity of families in three communities in Alberta where a parent has mental health problems and is also pregnant and/or has young children.

Expert Panel on Intensive Early Interventions for Children with Autism

- Makes recommendations on current research on autism and its implications for policy, and programming for services and for transition into school services for children with autism.

Parent-Child Literacy Strategy

- Integrates adult literacy instruction and early oral language development for children from birth to age six in economically and socially disadvantaged families.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Public Awareness (Media) Campaign

- Television and poster campaign launched in October 2002, aimed at pregnant women and their partners to raise awareness on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Programs and Initiatives - "A Healthy Start in Life" - continued

First Steps Program

- Provides one-on-one mentoring to women at high risk for giving birth to a baby exposed to prenatal alcohol. As part of the evaluation of Demonstration Projects, the three First Steps program evaluations demonstrate a number of promising practices.

Parent-Child Assistance Program

- A home visiting intervention program that provides services to high-risk substance abusing mothers and families with FASD-affected children.

Well Communities - Well Families (WCWF)

- Aims to prevent and manage FASD by building the capacity of communities to support healthy pregnancies and families.

Awakenings Program

- Develops appropriate responses to address FAS needs and builds prevention strategies to reduce the incidence of FASD and alcohol-related birth defects in Siksika First Nation.

Metis Nation of Alberta

- Enhances awareness and understanding about FAS/FAE among the Metis of Alberta through development of culturally appropriate public awareness materials including a video, pamphlets and posters.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Clinics (Capital and Calgary Health Regions)

- Diagnoses children and youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in the Capital Health Authority and the Calgary Health Region.

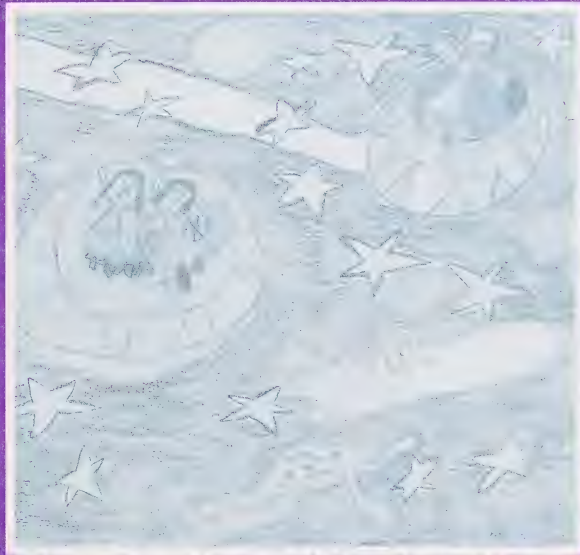
Magic Mirror

- An education resource tool for professionals working with children/youth involved in high-risk behaviours, the goal of which is to enhance feelings of self-worth, increase confidence, and recognize the ability of children/youth to make healthy life choices.

IMPACT AREA:

"Growing Up Safe & Healthy"

Children and youth need to explore, learn and grow in a safe and supportive community.



Chelsea Scraba - My Alberta

Aspirations

Our programs and initiatives in this area are working to:

- Protect children and youth by supporting families and building safe communities
- Help children and youth be successful at learning
- Support families and children and youth at risk
- Promote education, prevention and intervention

Programs & Initiatives

Our programs and initiatives are committed to having a positive impact by supporting safe and healthy environments for Alberta's children and youth. Since the 2001 Children's Forum, several new programs have been introduced to support this goal in the areas of safe homes and communities, healthy living, transitioning to adulthood, learning and developing, and targeted supports.



Smiles 'n' Snapshots

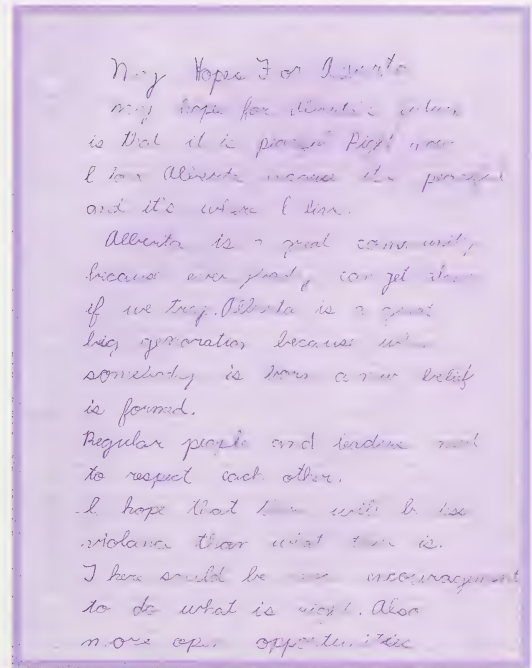
Program benefits to Alberta children and youth include:

- Improved access to safeguards are helping to ensure children and youth have safe homes and communities
- Enhanced learning programs are helping children and youth be successful at learning
- More children and youth are practicing healthy behaviours and making healthy lifestyle choices
- More families are healthy and able to nurture the development of their children and youth

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, we will continue to:

- Focus on enhancing integration of services
- Implement programs and services that better support families



Cole McCartney - My Alberta

Programs and Initiatives - “Growing Up Safe and Healthy”

Safe Homes and Communities

Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP)

- Changes introduced in 2001 enhance the support provided to children at risk of, or involved in prostitution, and ensure that their legal rights are safeguarded, supporting research into this area.

Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP) Program Evaluation

- A review of Protective Safe Houses and a full evaluation of the PCHIP initiative to assess program strengths and identify opportunities to improve services.

Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution-Awareness Campaign

- Increases awareness of child prostitution and communicates program availability for children who are involved in prostitution and need assistance.

Child Welfare Act Review

- Implementation of the Child Welfare Act Review with the goal of achieving a balance between promoting and ensuring the safety and well-being of children, and respecting the fundamental responsibility of parents for their children.
- The review resulted in: *The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Family Support for Children with Disabilities Act*, introduced in the Legislature in spring 2003.

Child Abuse Hotline

- Facilitates anonymous reporting of child abuse or neglect.

Building Community Capacity for Crisis Response and Risk Assessment Training

- Builds communities that are able to manage crisis response and develops risk assessment procedures for youth uttering threats within schools and communities across Alberta.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

Family Violence Prevention & Protection

Aims to protect family members from family violence. Recent projects include:

- Increased access to specialized supports and referrals to community-based support services for children who experience/witness family violence and who reside in shelters.
- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the RCMP, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, and Alberta Children's Services to identify response issues and strengthen working relationships.
- Comprehensive family violence training program for every RCMP Officer at "K" Division in Alberta.

Alberta New Identities for Victims of Abuse (NIVA) Program

- Assists individuals and their children, who are escaping high-risk life-threatening domestic violence relationships, by providing them with temporary protective measures until the threat assessment is complete.

Foster Care Review

- Implementation of a three-phased review to identify ways to support and improve the foster care system.

Alberta Response Model

- Implementation of the Alberta Response Model, to address the short-term and long-term needs of children, youth and families who come into contact with the Child Welfare system and focus on "family-centered practice with child-centered outcomes."

Child Welfare Training Programs (Competency Project, Risk Assessment, Hope Training)

- Implementation of initiatives aimed to ensuring that the child welfare workforce is fully trained and competent to provide higher quality service to children and families; includes training on risk assessment and the application of "hope" in practice.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

AMBER Alert Program

- Allows law enforcement agencies to immediately alert the public in the event of a serious child abduction so that a rapid response can occur to child-abduction cases.

Rubi and Watchdog Resources for Police

- Provides crime prevention materials to children, parents, and caregivers.

Healthy Living

Live Outside the Box Campaign

- Encourages youth aged 10 to 14 to be physically active in support of the province's mandate to support healthy living.

Immunization

- Provides immunizations at Well Child Clinics on an ongoing basis, as well as targeted immunization campaigns in response to communicable disease outbreaks (e.g. meningococcal disease).

Cross-Ministry Workshops: Understanding & Helping High Risk Children and Youth

- Consultation and training, such as those led by Dr. Bruce Perry, facilitates opportunities for professionals to share and build relationships and to get practical case-based learning experience.

AADAC School Strategy

- A research-based program for preventing the abuse of alcohol, other drugs and gambling through education and early intervention; programs currently being developed for transition ages: Grades include 4, 7, 9, and 11.

AADAC Websites

- Provides information to children, youth, parents and teachers with an emphasis on helping children and youth make healthy choices to prevent future problems and addictions.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

Prevention of Youth Tobacco Act and Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy

- Aims to reduce the number of young people starting to use tobacco, promote the cessation of tobacco use and reduce non-smokers' exposure to environmental (second-hand) tobacco smoke. Key Initiatives Include:
 - Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act
 - Increase in taxation on tobacco products
 - New anti-tobacco curriculum for schools
 - Promotional campaign to raise awareness
 - Handbook on "Creating Policy for Tobacco-free Schools" to help schools and school districts create effective tobacco-free school policies.

Alberta Youth Experience Survey - AADAC

- Provides statistical information on alcohol, other drug and gambling behaviour of Alberta students in grades 7 to 12.

Children's Mental Health Web Page

- Aims to increase awareness on children's mental health issues and provides reliable children's mental health resources for regional health authorities, other mental health professionals, and the general public.

Children's Mental Health Framework

- Development of the Children's Mental Health Framework to optimize the mental health of Alberta's children and youth by focusing on capacity-building to maintain mental health, reducing the risk of mental health problems, and providing support and treatment for children who have mental health disorders and problems.

Aboriginal Initiatives - Children's Mental Health

- Supports the well-being of Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities through culturally appropriate, community-based mental health promotion/prevention projects and education, training and conference activities.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

Transitioning to Adulthood

Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project

- Designed to increase Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship programs and to promote apprenticeship training in Aboriginal communities.

Youth in Transition Framework and Initiative

- Approved in November 2001, the Youth in Transition Framework provides better connections between programs and services at all levels of government to better address the needs of youth (ages 13 to 24) and help them make a successful transition to adulthood.

Youth in Transition Pilots

- Pilot programs implemented that explore ways to support and assist youth in transition.

Youth Connections Service & Labour Information Connection Centre

- Provides guidance, connections and references related to work and education for youth aged 16 to 25.

Youth Skills Development Program

- Provides basic skills training for youth aged 16 to 25.

Career Planning for Youth in Care

- Provides youth in care with access to career and employment information and planning.

"Your Choice Your Voice" Youth Forums - Alberta Children's Services

- Community-based Youth Forums, planned and co-ordinated by youth, occurred across Alberta from November 2002 to March 2003. The forums successfully met their objectives of empowering young people and increasing awareness of youth issues in each community.

Learning and Developing

First Nations, Metis and Inuit Educational Policy Framework

- Completed the Native Education Policy Review as part of Alberta Learning's commitment to enhance educational opportunities for Aboriginal learners in

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

First Nations, Metis and Inuit Educational Policy Framework (continued)

the province, and to develop an ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal communities and other education stakeholders and released the educational policy framework.

Aboriginal Resource: Teaching Students with Emotional Disorders and/or Mental Illness

- Resources developed for educators and service providers working with Aboriginal students whose emotional or mental health status interferes with successful learning, including workshops at three Aboriginal sites.

Student Health Initiative

- Additional funding provided for the Student Health Initiative, which improves access to and enhances the provision of integrated health and related support services for children with special health needs, so they can participate fully in their education programs and be successful at learning.

Effective Behaviourial Supports (Phase 2 of Safe & Caring Schools)

- Supports school communities as they work to proactively and creatively encourage and promote safe and caring school environments that foster and maintain respectful and responsible behaviours.

Removing Barriers to High School Completion

- Alberta Learning conducted a study of barriers to high school completion and provided findings to school boards and the public in 2001. The report outlined various students, school and community factors associated with students' leaving school before completing grade 12.

Aboriginal Studies

- Aims to increase awareness, appreciation and understanding among all Alberta students of the rich history, culture and contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada and to develop a sense of pride among Aboriginal students in their cultural heritage.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

- Aims to improve student learning by encouraging teachers, parents and the community to work together to introduce innovative and creative programs that reflect the unique needs and circumstances within school jurisdictions. Implemented an on-line library of effective practices of programs, including early intervention and early literacy and numeracy, to share knowledge about how to improve student learning and sustain school improvement.

Learn Alberta.ca Website

- Launched Learn Alberta.ca website which provides teachers, students and parents with access to a variety of on-line learning resources.

Target Support Young Offender Mental Health Services

- Increases access to mental health assessment and treatment for young offenders, including targeted therapeutic programs aimed at female and Aboriginal young offenders.

Provincial Diversion Program

- Ensures, whenever appropriate, adolescents and adults with mental illness who are in conflict with the law receive appropriate care, support and treatment from mental health, social and support services thereby reducing reliance on the criminal justice system.

Young Offender Mental Health Outcomes Project

- A system of assessment, program planning, and program evaluation related to mental health services for young offenders both within the young offender centers and transitioning to community-based outpatient treatment, for instance, forensic adolescent programs.

Forensic Adolescent Program (Calgary) and Centrepoint (Edmonton)

- Provides enhanced specialized mental health assessment, treatment and consultation on an outpatient and outreach basis related to young offenders.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

FASD Initiatives-Young Offenders

- Provides education, training, and information resources to professionals working with FASD-affected young offenders. Example initiatives include FASD staff awareness training, use of multi-disciplinary teams at young offender centres, provision of healthy pregnancy/FASD resource material to young offender centres, and several FAS committees and partnerships aimed at determining more effective responses to issues surrounding FASD affected offenders.

Youth Criminal Justice Act

- On April 1, 2003 a new law was implemented to replace Young Offenders Act that provides the legislative framework for a more effective youth justice system.

Complex Case Policy - Children's Mental Health

- Aims to enhance the knowledge and abilities of people who work with children/youth with complex mental health difficulties.

Children's Mental Health School and Community Promotion

- Addresses specific mental health issues on a community basis in an effort to reduce risk behaviours and increase the emotional well-being and resiliency of children and youth.

Provincial Eating Disorder Service

- Development of Body Image Resource Kits which, along with a full range of coordinated services, promote self-acceptance, healthy eating, active living, improved self-esteem and a positive body image. An Eating Disorders conference was held which developed standards for eating disorder services.

Programs and Initiatives - "Growing Up Safe and Healthy" - continued

Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention

- Ministries have been working together to develop a provincial strategy to address Aboriginal youth suicide. Other initiatives include training; a conference held in Edmonton in 2002 called 'Lifting the Silence on Suicide: Together We Can Make a Difference', and research initiatives to understand suicide factors to significantly reduce the incidence of suicide and suicide attempts by Aboriginal youth.

Children and Youth with Special & Complex Needs

- Development of a policy framework and process for enhanced cross-ministry coordination and support for children and youth with special and complex needs and their families.

Alberta Liquor Store Campaign

- Campaign launched in October 2002, aimed to increase awareness and promote prevention of FASD through knowledge on responsible drinking behaviour.

Teaching for the Prevention of FASD

- A teaching resource for grades 1 to 12 that provides learning activities and background information related to alcohol use and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder.

Coaching Families Program

- Provides coaching and support to families with FAS-affected children or youth.

Parenting After Separation

- Expanded parenting after separation programs targeted to parents with young children.

CUPS Parent Education Program Development Project

- Support to the Calgary Urban Project Society for development of a Parent Education Program for families who struggle with poverty and/or are homeless.

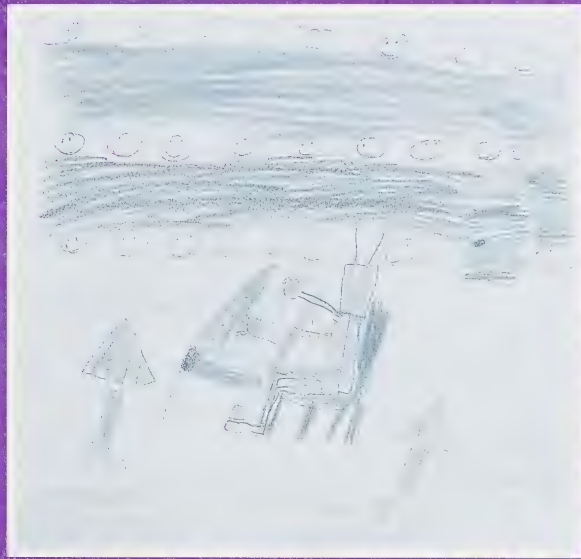
Alberta Child Health Benefit

- Expanded eligibility for premium - free coverage (medical, dental, prescription drugs) for low-income children and families.

IMPACT AREA:

“Mentors & Everyday Heroes”

Children and youth need positive relationships to encourage them to dream, believe in themselves and make healthy choices.



Jamie Babiuk - My Alberta

Aspirations

Our programs and initiatives in this area are working to:

- Educate children and youth about the benefits of making healthy choices
- Instill self-esteem, confidence and skills in youth to foster a successful transition to adulthood
- Foster healthy relationships and involve adults as mentors for children and youth
- Provide support, guidance and awareness for all children and youth of the cultural benefits of helping others

Programs & Initiatives

Our programs and initiatives are committed to having a positive impact on the lives of Alberta's children and youth through the support of mentors and everyday heroes. Since the 2001 Children's Forum, many new programs have been introduced to support this goal.



Smiles 'n' Snapshots

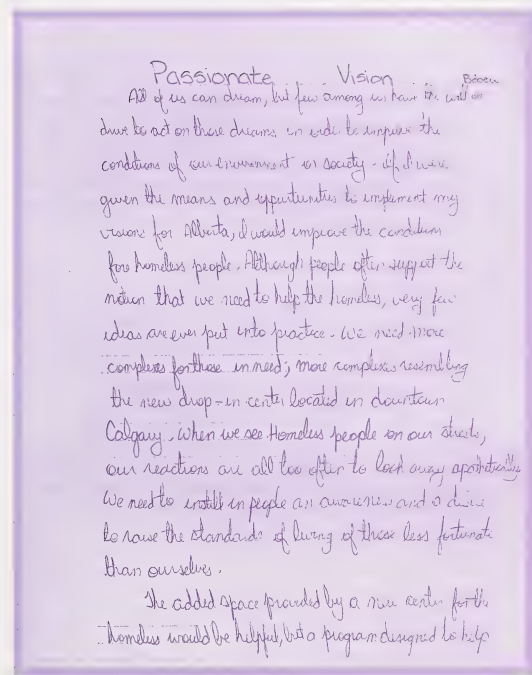
Program benefits to Alberta children and youth include:

- Improved access to programs are giving children and youth the skills and abilities to make healthy choices
- Youth have enhanced supports in making a successful transition to adulthood
- Children and youth have positive relationships with adult role models and increased connectedness with mentors
- Aboriginal children and youth receive enhanced supports that are responsive to their cultural needs

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, we will continue to:

- Increase the diversity of mentoring options and opportunities for all Albertans, including Aboriginal children and youth at risk.



Bebeci Chen - My Alberta

Programs and Initiatives - “Mentors & Everyday Heroes”

“Mentoring Works!” Public Awareness and Recruitment Campaign

- Launched in September 2002, the campaign aims to increase the number of adults willing to mentor children and youth.

Mentoring Pilots

- Mentoring pilots implemented to further the understanding of what is needed to better support youth at risk and youth in transition.

Government Staff Volunteering as Mentors

- Supporting Government Staff who volunteer as school based mentors for children and youth.

Alberta Mentoring Partnership

- Establishment of a resource centre for mentoring to allow public access to mentoring resources such as screening, training tools, and best practices information.

AADAC Resiliency Initiatives

Aims to prevent alcohol/drug/gambling problems by increasing resiliency in youth. New initiatives include:

- A resiliency campaign in High Level promoting and recognizing caring relationships between youth and seniors, and other business, professional adults; and
- A resiliency campaign in Medicine Hat that supports key influencers to spread the word about the power adults in that community have in the lives of children and youth.

Programs and Initiatives - "Mentors & Everyday Heroes" - continued

AADAC School Strategy: "Teaming Up"

- Uses mentors within the community to encourage children in grades 4, 5 and 6 to choose to be tobacco-free.

Intensive Support & Supervision Program (ISSP)

- Provides more intensive support, supervision, and interaction between a probation officer and young offender, where the need exists.

Lethbridge Justice FASD Project

- Diverts FASD-affected youth from the criminal justice system where appropriate, provides recommendations to the court, influences problem solving and management, and provides advocacy for the family, school and community.

Healthy Relationships Program

- A weekend retreat program that educates young people aged 16 to 18 on healthy relationships.

Youth Attendance Centres (Calgary and Edmonton)

- Expanded programs provide supervision and intervention for higher risk young offenders on release or on probation.

CFSA Partnership (Calgary and Edmonton)

- Provides for a young offender specialist to be available in Youth Court, whose aim is to divert youth from being remanded into custody.



Children and youth need positive relationships to
encourage them to dream,
believe in themselves

and make healthy choices.

IMPACT AREA:

“Learning to Help Others”

Children and youth need to experience the rewards of helping others,
voicing ideas and making a difference.



Braden Hrehorets - My Alberta

Aspirations

Our programs and initiatives in this area are working to:

- Ensure youth have a voice in addressing their needs
- Involve youth in program identification, planning and delivery
- Encourage children and youth to help others and participate in their community

Programs & Initiatives

Our programs and initiatives are committed to having a positive impact on Alberta's children and youth through learning and helping others. Since the 2001 Children's Forum, several new programs have been introduced to support this goal.



Smiles 'n' Snapshots

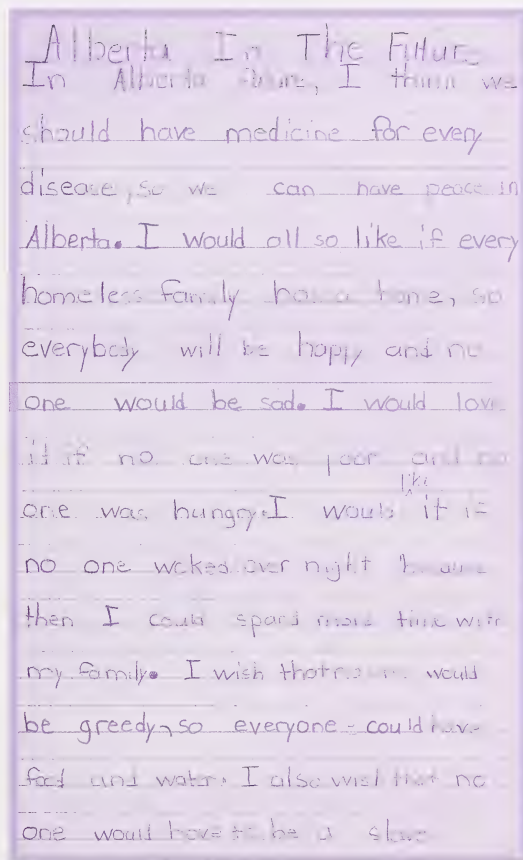
Program benefits to Alberta's children and youth include:

- Youth have an increased, active voice in planning and delivering programs and services
- Youth have more interaction with their peers and the community
- More children and youth are participating and are recognized for contributing to their families and communities

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, we will continue to:

- Provide opportunities for children and youth to participate
- Listen and incorporate the voice of youth in our work
- Encourage youth involvement and empowerment in taking on roles and responsibilities in implementation



Jacqueline Sinnett - My Alberta

Programs and Initiatives - "Learning to Help Others"

Youth Alternative (YA!) - AADAC

- Helps communities develop their own solutions to the problem of alcohol use and abuse by youth. Encourages youth involvement by asking teenagers to create alternatives to alcohol consumption, and to help them make responsible, educated choices about alcohol use.

Great Kids Awards

- Recognizes and celebrates Alberta children and youth for their outstanding accomplishments at home and in their communities.

Youth Advisory Panel

- Provides a youth perspective on work done by the Youth Secretariat, Children's Services and other government agencies. The Panel also provides the Chair of the Secretariat with feedback on proposed recommendations and findings.

Youth Advisory Committee (AADAC)

- Involves youth in reviewing AADAC materials and programs to ensure their relevance to young people and in providing input into future plans and activities of the initiative; the committee is comprised of 12 teenagers from across the province, aged 15 to 18 years, and their adult mentors who are AADAC staff.

Children's Mental Health Youth Initiatives

- Provides orientation to Alberta youth wishing to develop local mental health initiatives with the support of community partners and professional mental health staff.

Association for Youth in Care (Edmonton and Calgary)

- Peer support networks run by youth for youth in care, or formerly in care.

Youth Restorative Action Project Youth Justice Committee

- Alberta Youth Justice Committee is comprised of youth aged 15 to 24, and provides a forum for dealing with youth aged 12 to 17 that have committed an offence involving racism, intolerance or significant social issues.

IMPACT AREA:

“Responsive Communities”

Alberta needs leaders and innovators to create communities where children and youth can reach their full potential.



Kimberly Johnson - My Alberta

Aspirations

Our programs and initiatives in this area are working to:

- Ensure communities have the knowledge, skills and supports to respond to the needs of local children and youth
- Build local capacity and provide targeted programs to meet community needs
- Build on regional and local partnerships and collaborate to achieve common goals for Alberta's children and youth
- Continually improve and enhance the supports available for children youth, and families

Programs & Initiatives

Our programs and initiatives are committed to having a positive impact by helping to build responsive communities. Since the 2001 Children's Forum, several new programs have been introduced to support this goal.



Smiles 'n' Snapshots

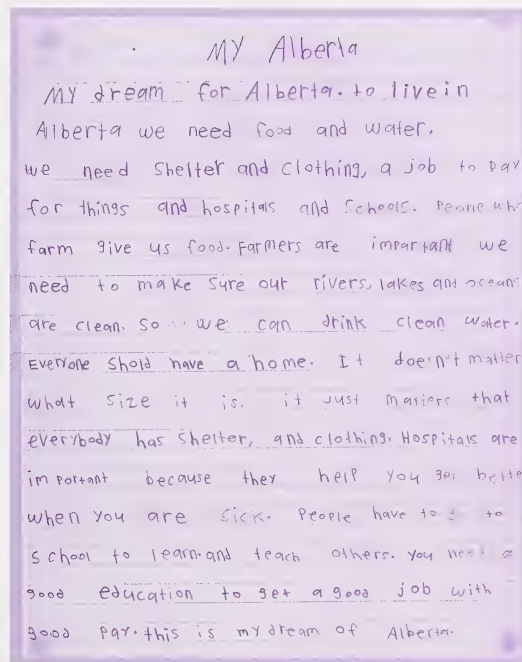
Program benefits to Alberta children and youth include:

- Government ministries and agencies are more effectively working together to improve the lives of Alberta's children and youth
- Better access to programs and services at the community level
- Leading-edge research, innovation and partnerships are providing guidance for programs and services
- More communities actively involved in planning and delivering integrated programs

Tomorrow

Tomorrow, we will continue to:

- Support innovative research
- Develop strategies for improving information-sharing between partners and with families
- Collaborate, integrate and coordinate joint planning



Amber Caissie - My Alberta

Programs and Initiatives - "Responsive Communities"

Telemental Health Conferencing

- Teaches and discusses children's mental health issues; aimed at mental health therapists and allied professionals working with children.

Family and Community Support Services

- Increased funding to Family and Community Support Services to invest in preventative social services to help build stronger communities in Alberta.
- Expanded Family and Community Support Services programs for young children and families.

Early Childhood Research

- Through workshops and presentations, Child and Family Services Authorities, First Nations community members, medical officers of health and community representatives, were supported by Dr. Fraser Mustard and other leaders in early childhood research in developing their regional early childhood development plans.

Cross-Ministry Training Workshops - Children's Mental Health

- Facilitates opportunities for professional sharing and relationship building, provides practical case-based learning experience, and develops a common set of facts, concepts and principles to guide those working with children, independent of discipline or organization.

Family Therapy Training & Community Workshops - Children's Mental Health

- Provides opportunities for mental health therapists and community partners to gain knowledge and skills in the area of family therapy, enhances networking opportunities and increases competency and experience with children, youth and families.

Annual Children's Mental Health Conference

- Provides leadership in children's mental health and creates an accessible education forum for professionals and community members.

Programs and Initiatives - "Responsive Communities" - continued

Alberta Early Years Conference

- Provided support to the Alberta Early Years Conference held in Edmonton in the fall of 2002.

Children's Mental Health Post Secondary Education: Mount Royal's Children's Mental Health Certificate, University of Calgary Children's Mental Health Courses

Aims to:

- Enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals and para-professionals who work directly with children and youth with mental health problems.
- Ensure accountability, continuous quality improvement and the sustainability of human resources.
- Take a proactive approach in the promotion of children's mental health, better support children with mental health problems and their families, and promote children's mental health in communities.

Aboriginal Policy Initiative

- Continued progress in transforming the commitments made in the Aboriginal Policy Framework into actions; allows provincial ministries and departments to work collaboratively on issues facing Alberta's Aboriginal people, including children and youth.

Youth Secretariat

- Identifies key issues facing youth and builds upon existing initiatives and partnerships to provide a mechanism through which issues impacting youth at risk can be identified and addressed.

Aboriginal Health Strategy (AHS)

- Provides a policy and funding framework for health providers and Aboriginal community members to work together to improve the health status of Aboriginal people in Alberta, including Aboriginal women and children, pregnant and parenting youth, and young adults interested in health careers.

Programs and Initiatives - "Responsive Communities" - continued

Rainbow Spirit Project - Aboriginal Youth Program

- Identifies and implements a series of best practices in six district schools in order to assist the districts and educators in meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners in an integrated setting.

Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research

- Announced in March 2003, the centre will develop, support, and integrate research across sectors and disciplines to provide a strong evidence-based foundation for identifying and promoting effective public policy and service delivery to improve the well-being of Alberta's children, families, and communities.

Adoption Website

- Launched in February 2003, the website serves as a valuable tool to recruit adoptive families for children in permanent government care.

Alberta Partnership on FAS

- A partnership of government departments/agencies and community organizations working together to prevent FASD as well as care, support and foster development of individuals with FASD.

Region Wide Multi-disciplinary Team Advocacy & Support Program

- Provides support and advocacy for individuals and families affected with FASD. Example initiatives include facilitating access to diagnostic services, support for healthy family relationships, preventative strategies, and family advocacy.

Community Outreach Project

- Provides services and supports to help FASD-affected children/families live effectively in their communities.

Programs and Initiatives - "Responsive Communities" - continued

Autism Symposium

- Held in October 2002, the symposium offered participants an opportunity to work together to identify priorities in planning for future policy, designing services, and promoting continuing collaboration among partnering ministries.

Southern Alberta Child & Youth Health Network (SACYHN)

- Establishment of a network of partnerships to better plan for child health care in southern Alberta, it is linked with the building of Calgary Children's Hospital, a world-class pediatric health care facility, combining state-of-the-art technology with family-centred care, research and education.

Family Law Reform Project

- A review of provincial family laws to update and incorporate more understandable language. It has involved input from Albertans on several family-law related issues.

ACYI Information Sharing Initiative

- Development of Information Sharing Guidelines, that aims to remove barriers, provide training, increase information sharing and work more collaboratively when providing services to children and families.

Alberta's Promise

- Alberta's Promise is a province-wide initiative that facilitates the connection of community resources with initiatives that create more opportunities for children to live, learn and play in a safe environment. By recognizing, communicating and celebrating accomplishments, we encourage further investment in our children.

Programs and Initiatives - "Responsive Communities" - continued

Alberta's Promise - continued

The shared promise of this initiative reads: "We promise to be partners with our neighbours, heroes to our children and champions of their future." As Albertans, it's up to each of us to make our common vision a reality.

The Five Promises were created to help shape this initiative as people from across the province, and beyond, come together, working in partnership, to ensure that all Alberta's young people receive the attention and support they need to succeed.

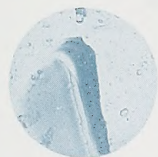
Several important milestones have been achieved in the development of this provincial initiative, including the selection of the Premier's Council, the inaugural council meeting, the appointment of an Executive Director, and the official announcement of Alberta's Promise in the Throne Speech of February 18 outlining Bill 1 and the *Premier's Council of Alberta's Promise Act*.

The official launch, on May 20, 2003, will set this exciting initiative into motion, as Albertans are encouraged to commit to promises that will help ensure our province's young people receive the attention and support they need to succeed.

Youth Justice Committees

- Youth Justice Committees have expanded throughout Alberta and work with Alberta's Justice system to hold young offenders properly accountable for their crimes and offer an alternative to the formal court process.

Summary

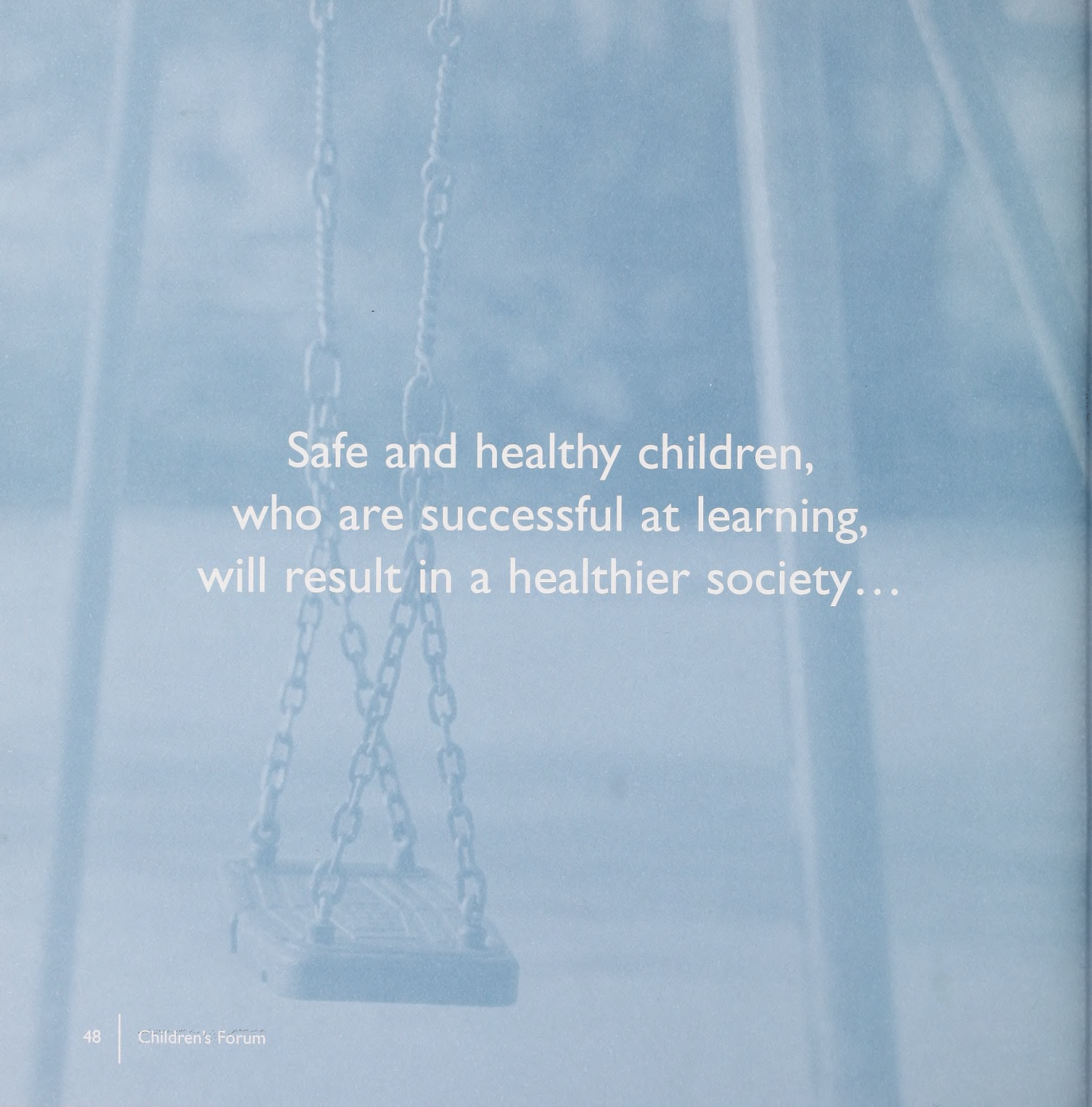


Exciting work has been done since the 2001 Children's Forum to better support Alberta's children, youth and families. Providing services and supports to Alberta's children and youth is a significant task but we remain committed to the challenge.

We all have a role to play in ensuring Alberta's children and youth reach their potential. Government ministries and regional authorities are continually striving to find innovative ways to better support parents, families and communities in giving children and youth today the caring and encouragement they need to ensure the well-being and prosperity of our province tomorrow.

Children and Youth Forums provide an important opportunity for Albertans to become involved and to share their priorities for improving the lives of children, youth and families and to contribute to the future of Alberta.





Safe and healthy children,
who are successful at learning,
will result in a healthier society...



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